

**Abstract ID :** 21

**Title :** Does handling and attaching devices on lactating antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*) females affect their maternal performances?

**Category :** Ecology

**Student :** Not Applicable

**Preferred Format :** Poster Presentation

**Abstract :** We investigated pup growth and maternal attendance pattern in Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) on Heard Island. Some adult females were captured (manipulated) to attach tracking devices (t.d.) or to monitor milk transfer to the pup, and pups were weighed regularly. We compared pup growth rates from 1) mums that were and weren't handled and 2) mums with and without tracking devices. In all cases, male pups grew significantly faster than females. Pup growth rate was not affected by manipulation of the mother. However, some mother changed the duration of the foraging trip following manipulation, but the mean duration of foraging trips did not change before and after the manipulation occurred. Our results suggest manipulating lactating Antarctic fur seals induce punctual changes in the maternal attendance behaviour of some individuals, without detectable effect on their pup growth.